

MINUTES FOR MARCH 5, 2009
MEETING OF THE PEDESTRIAN AND TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

Members Present: Erwin Mack, Chair, Alyce Ortuzar; Ken Hartman, B-CC Regional Service Center; Colleen Mitchell, Peter Moe, MSHA, MHSO; James D'Andrea; Doris Depaz; Jack Strausman; Al Roshdieh for Arthur Holmes, MCDOT; Alan Migdall; Ronald Smith, MCPD; Charles Kines; John Britton; Steve Friedman;

Members Absent: John Howley; Ben Stutz for Councilmember Valerie Ervin;

County Staff: Tom Pogue; Jeff Dunkel, Pedestrian Safety Coordinator; Larry McGoogin, Safe Routes To School Coordinator; Tom Street, County Executive Office; Esther Bowring, PIO; Fred Lees, DOT Traffic Operations; Don Scheuerman, DGS Building Design & Construction; ; Roylene Roberts, Silver Spring Regional Services Center; Rita Gale, Department of Libraries.

Guests: Nestor Alvarenga, CASA de Maryland; Harry Thomas, Rockville Traffic & Transportation Commission; Bill Evans, The Lukmire Partnership, Inc; Eileen Finnegan, Hallandale Citizenship Association

Agenda Items:

1. Committee Business
 - a. Review minutes from January/FEB meetings
 - b. Report on February 12 meeting w/CE – need annual report
 - c. Future meeting schedule and locations – July/Sept on holiday
 - d. Update on SRTS Program
2. Drivers Education DVD – Esther Bowring
3. Street Smart Regional Education Campaign 2009 - Peter Moe
4. Silver Spring Library Pedestrian Bridge – Wayne Avenue Pedestrian Facilities - Rita Gale(Dept. of Libraries) and Don Scheuerman (DGS)
5. University Blvd and New Hampshire: Need for Additional Pedestrian Barriers - - Erwin Mack
6. Report on status of first HIA on piney branch
 - a. Perception survey complete – Doris DePaz
 - b. Countystat presentation slides/actions - - Fred lees
7. Accessible Pedestrian Signals – Powder Mill and New Hampshire – Erwin Mack
 - a. How can committee find out about projects and concerns earlier?
8. New Business/Committee Comments
 - a. Bells on bicycles when riding on sidewalks
 - b. CE priorities for Pedestrian safety initiative – budget other?
 - c. Next meeting date April 2 or May 7?

Item 1: Committee Business:

The meeting came to order at approximately 7:05 p.m. A larger group was assembled, including additional guests from the City of Rockville's Traffic & Transportation Commission. The meeting was conducted by Chairman Erwin Mack.

The January minutes were distributed; February minutes had been distributed prior to the meeting. Discussion ensued on the February minutes'. MACK – page 3 of minutes have an action on the concept of the parking and the motion was passed; The reference to the pedestrian hit – they were 20 ft from crosswalk as opposed to 40 ft.

Mack complimented Jack Strausman for getting things done (electrifying lights) immediately with his Blackberry communications. Request for action from tonight's meeting having to do with the Silver Spring Library pedestrian bridge – following the last meeting, Colleen Mitchell took action by email but this was not written into the minutes. Peter Moe action moved on obtaining crash records reports – how are these actions being implemented. Jeff Dunckel responded that we are going to have to follow up with police on that item.

Alan Migdall raised several issues: item 2 – the reference to “this presented the concern over safety.” Dunckel clarified that the concern cited was a concern of contra-flow bike traffic where there were cars parking. Wording was changed to say “this presented concern about safety . . .” Migdall expressed concern that the minutes did not reflect the possibility that the County Executive could override the required 2/3 majority of residents that County policy stipulates must approve parking changes on County residential streets. This would have to be taken up as new business, as it was not discussed at the February meeting. Peter Moe clarified that the visitors from Rockville were from the Rockville Traffic and Transportation Commission, an advisory commission to the Mayor and City Council; they were not City employees. In item 7; misspelled John Oberg's name - corrected

Mack moved to accept February minutes as amended, seconded and passed unanimously.

New business was introduced regarding Migdall's concern that the Committee consider whether to suggest the County Executive override the 2/3 majority requirement for parking changes. Alyce Ortuzar objected to recommending actions contrary to the desires of the community. **A motion was made to record that the County Executive has, as an option, the ability to override the 2/3 majority of the neighbors. Motion was passed with one objection.**

The minutes for the January meeting were distributed; to be considered for approval at the end of the meeting.

The second item was the February 12 meeting with the County Executive. Mack expressed satisfaction that a very good meeting was held. The County Executive is impressed with the very good people who are serving on the committee; they will be an asset to both him and the County Council. Mack expressed thanks to all those who attended the meeting. One item became clear, the committee must produce an annual report. This needs to be an item on the committee's agenda.

Mack asked for direction from the committee on whether the July and September meetings, scheduled before a holiday weekend, would be a problem for anyone on the committee. The committee indicated this would not be a problem.

Larry McGoogin provided an update on the Safe Routes to Schools Program. He has been setting up meetings with school PTAs. A school safety program was held for an elementary school in Silver Spring, dealing with several safety issues, including pedestrian safety. McGoogin has additional meetings scheduled for New Hampshire Avenue Estates and Thurgood Marshall next month. Also distributing a stand-up display of photographs taken by school children; this is being rotated through the schools now. Engineering studies completed for the 11 Grant B schools; getting started on the Grant C schools. Quarterly report submitted to the State, and website being updated. Moe mentioned WABA setting up interagency coordination sessions. McGoogin stated WABA talked about need for us to gather all SRTS coordinators in our area; - - Rockville, Takoma Park - - and coordinate everyone's goals. They will be meeting in the future maybe early April. Also conducting bicycle training for 17 schools high priority schools - - will train teachers to teach bike training for students.

Mack indicated that the committee may meet at locations other than Rockville EOB. Mack reported that there were good turnouts at meeting held out in the communities; he requested recommendations on where meetings should be held.

Item 2. Drivers Education DVD – Messages Being Developed

Esther Bowring, of the Public Information Office, described her work on a new pedestrian safety video, as well as the results from the distribution of the first video last Fall – English language instructional video aimed at non-native English speakers – distributed through-out the County to speakers of other language teachers. We are also trying to get it out in a number of other ways to anyone that can show to groups, communities, community activists groups of people., kids, etc. It has a teachers guide w/activities, done in 5 different parts so each part is 5 minutes long and can be viewed independently – promotes basic pedestrian safety concepts.

Dunckel distributed copies of this first video the last time Bowring met with the Committee – the County is now trying to get it out into the larger community: both businesses and community groups. Would appreciate any help the committee could provide. The video is a good tool to learn both pedestrian safety and English. We have distributed 1,100 copies to date. The video has been very well received by those how have gotten it.

We have some results from this video distribution – this is included in the meeting packet. For videos sent out we included a survey of pre-imposed survey that we asked teachers to have their students complete and send back. It was a little hit or miss – we got back about under 100, which is pretty good – the pre-impose was administered before the students watch the video to comment on pedestrian safety, their own behaviors and knowledge, then after watching the video, teachers were told to wait a couple weeks, then resurvey them with same questions – we got some fantastic results, at least from the people who responded. It is these results that are in the meeting packet.

One of the aims of the video was to not only to educate the students but also that those people take the knowledge back to their family and friends and share the information. Eighty-six percent of the respondents said they talked to family/friends about ways to walk safely, after viewing the video. We also got good results in terms of improvements in the most risky behaviors – see handout.

Since we were so successful with the first video, we decided to do another one this year. The first one is called “WALK SAFE” - - we're attempting to use the name DRIVE SAFE for the second video - - but looking at trademark issues. This second video is targeted at new drivers who are both teens and non-native English speakers who may be getting their drivers license in our county for the first time. Bowring called all 35 driving schools in Montgomery County to see if they were

interested in such a video. Uniformly, they all said “absolutely,” and that they would be willing to make time in their instruction to show such a video – I have reached out to schools, and the State – a large number of people who are going to help us distribute this second video to our target audience.

We are just beginning the process; Bowring is seeking the committee’s input on the concept and the ideas – listed in packet – she reviewed the 5 messages being considered for the video: drivers must take responsibility and watch out for pedestrians; be aware of pedestrians; know the laws; have patience; and be especially careful near children, seniors and the disabled.

How are we going to reach the teen audience? One concern was to do a 15-minute video – how to keep teenagers’ attention that long. Our video producer is young and he has a lot of ideas – he said kids were not going to sit through 15-minute video – we need to do something edgy and have 10 one-to-three minute short pieces, each of which get at one message that is very compelling and really going to effect the young audience. And teachers would have more flexibility on when to show them. Then adapt these for non-English speakers and with voiceovers. This would be much more appropriate.

We are also going to create public service announcements on our channel – sent it out to all stations: TV, cable and radio stations in area. Comcast promised to show it also on their station as well. Our YouTube site -you can view it and order it online as well. We plan to put this driver’s video on YouTube.

Bowring asked the committee to review the concepts being planned, and let her know what they think – if they have any thoughts, idea, or comments, let her know. Please watch and give comments, ideas. Can send you the script for feedback too.

Steve Friedman noted that the concepts were good, but that the one omission that jumped out was the lack of reference to cyclists- needing to share the road, that cyclists have the right to be on the road- the need to be patient and cautious toward bicycles. Young drivers drive aggressively. Need to teach them to be less aggressive towards pedestrians, bicycles, etc. Bowring thought these were good thoughts; will propose having a segment on bicyclists. Friedman indicated he would be happy to work with Bowring – reviewing the script when it is prepared. Dunkel mentioned that he and Bowring would be meeting with the video producer on Monday, and asked that Friedman email some thoughts or comments he might have – to discuss with the producer on Monday.

One of things the videographer wants to do is have first segment be interviews with those affected by pedestrian tragedies – victims, family members of people killed, and drivers who have hit someone – Mack volunteered; Tom Pogue also mentioned someone he knew who had hit someone and wants to talk to others about avoiding such terrible experiences – he was interested in talking to young people, so we invited him to come to “train the trainer” in school; he made a compelling 3-minute testimony.

Doris DePaz asked about producing videos in other languages. Bowring explained that we did this in English, for non-native English speakers (ESOL) students because, with over 100 different languages spoken in the County, we thought this was a way to reach all of them. The ESOL teachers would be able to address comprehension issues. With the next video, it may be easier to do voiceovers with the format of shorter pieces. The first video was done with English subtitles. The teachers guide had activities to assist with discussion groups, etc. that could be adapted for language needs. If we have enough money, we may be able to translate this next video into Spanish. Peter Moe indicated he may have a source of money for such an effort.

John Britton asked about using the video in such a way as to encourage transportation other than driving. Bowring suggested that most pedestrians are drivers at one point or another. The message this video is to convey is when you are behind the wheel, let's drive in a safer way for pedestrians. Alyce Ortuzar suggested having subject matter in the video that encouraged non-auto travel: buses, transit, bikes, etc. Ortuzar also revisited the issue of the need to review accident reports. This had been discussed at the February meeting; it was agreed to defer this issue by placing it in the "Parking Lot on future issues." Moe said we should discuss this issue at a future date in terms of how we can get useful info to change outcomes. The group consensus was that the "Parking Lot" would be referred to from now on as the "Bike Rack."

James D'Andrea pointed out that the one-to-three minute format was an excellent way to reach the kids in schools through morning announcements – televised announcements are often used in schools.

Esther Bowring raised the concern of pedestrian safety in parking lots. The CountyStat report noted a surprisingly high number of seniors being struck in parking lots in the North Bethesda/Rockville Pike area. Bowring had applied for grant several years ago to analyze parking lot safety. The grant was denied. If there is money left over from video project Bowring would like to put it toward research on meeting w/retailers and property managers and others to brainstorm the concept on parking lot safety- - how do we get peoples' attention to be more careful in parking lots. In parking lots, people are drivers and pedestrians: after parking their cars, drivers get out and become pedestrians. Jack Strausman noted that this has been a concern at PEPCO: many accidents occur from backing up vehicles out of parking spaces. A significant reduction in accidents occurred when operators were required to back into spaces instead of out of them.

Bowring left her business card and some of the first videos for members of the committee to have; members were encouraged to contact her with any thoughts or ideas they might have on the upcoming second video production.

3. Street Smart Regional Education Campaign – 2009 (Deferred until after Item 4)

Peter Moe quickly briefed the committee on the upcoming Street Smart campaign. This program has run for a number of years; this Spring's campaign will be kicked off on 3/26 in DC and enforcement will be underway. In the packet are information materials being used in the campaign. – transit will advertise (info included in packet) – handout is a separate initiative in Baltimore area will be transit ads in all 4 garages and 60 buses and used as web banners. Focusing on bike awareness for motorists; we will be making this information available to you. Information will be available in electronic formats as well.

Steve Friedman commented that he thought the materials were great. I think they appear to be appropriate and accurate - - with your permission your okay on wide dissemination of this material on list serve, bike clubs? Moe says yes.

4. Silver Spring Library Pedestrian Bridge

Mack pointed out that in the February minutes, it had been recorded that Colleen Mitchell had accepted the challenging role to speak for us to the County regarding Silver Spring Library pedestrian bridge. She wrote out the appropriate response based on our discussion and we obtained approval of the PTSAC position via emails. We are asking the committee to recognize the fact that it was done through emails and that it needs to be brought into tonight's minutes as the committee's official position. What Colleen Mitchell drafted will become record for the

meeting tonight but referring to action taken in previous meeting. (See attached letter to the County Council, submitted via email on February 11, 2009) The committee agreed it would not favor a Silver Spring Library pedestrian bridge at this time; Mack welcomed guests here this evening to speak to that issue.

Mack noted that the position developed by the committee was drafted in only 4 days because the committee had no previous awareness of the project or the issue; that the issue first came to the committee on evening of February 5 and the committee was informed that they had to have their position submitted to the County Council by February 11 if they wanted it considered. This precluded any opportunity to interact with those who were working to advance the Library and were considering the advantages of the proposed pedestrian bridge.

Colleen Mitchell summarized the committee's position that was reflected in three key points. The committee did not support the construction of a pedestrian bridge across Wayne Avenue because more cost-efficient and proven improvements that would serve more patrons, as well as the larger Silver Spring community, should be pursued and prioritized to provide access to the library. The committee's three key points are: 1) a pedestrian bridge in this location is prohibited by the Silver Spring 1999 Urban Renewal Plan, the committee wants the project to adhere to those requirements since there is national evidence that pedestrians bridges, though very expensive, are often under used and can impede the creation of urban spaces, 2) a bridge from the library to the parking garage across the street will not improve pedestrian safety for the majority of library users; pedestrian bridges are extremely expensive but will only serve a small number of patrons, prioritizing automobile drivers over other modes of travel (walking, biking, and transit), when the County is making efforts to get people out of their cars, using other modes of travel, and 3) a pedestrian bridge will actually take away from the street below, degrading the street environment and create security issues, discouraging walking, bicycling, and transit use.

Mack invited Rita Gale, Public Services Administrator for the Department of Public Libraries, doing facilities and strategic planning to speak to the committee. Gale introduced Don Scheuerman, Acting Section Chief of Project Management of the Division of Building Design and Construction of the Department of General Services; Bill Evans, project architect designing the library; and Roylene Roberts, Acting Director of the Silver Spring Regional Services Center. Scheuerman pointed out that Fred Lees, of MCDOT, was also present and that his Traffic Operations Unit had evaluated the feasibility of a mid-block crossing on Wayne Avenue.

Gale proceeded to describe the project from the Department of Libraries' perspective. The property at Wayne and Fenton was acquired initially for a library and from our perspective that is our primary interest - - that the library gets constructed. Because of the expense of acquiring the property, it is now going to be much more than just a library. At the time we looked at site design, the designs proposed underground parking because one of our program requirements is that the library must have parking. The library that is going to be built in Silver Spring is a library in Silver Spring, not a library for just the Silver Spring community. We see it as a County facility; there will be more than just Silver Spring residents coming to it. As part our project specifications, we have always specified parking. When it became obvious that the cost for the underground parking was going to be prohibitive, our Director said she would be more than happy to have Wayne Avenue Garage serve as the parking facility but she wanted a way for customer to get into the facility without crossing Wayne Avenue. The people who traditionally use the library are parents with young children, people with lots of materials in their hands, and particularly at this library, we are planning on putting in a disability resources section that will attract many patrons with disabilities and limited mobility. We want to provide a means to get these patrons safely from the parking garage, as quickly and easily as possible, into the library.

We are in process now to see how floors are going to be constructed in the library. One of the current possibilities is the library entrance from the park garage with a pedestrian bridge that would come in at level 3 at library, connecting to level 4 at the garage. Scheuerman will talk about our discussions with the Silver Spring Parking District and how to accommodate our customers. We are looking at the pedestrian bridge as a way to get folks into the library in the fastest way possible. If they don't have fast access, they will go to other facilities with close by parking. We want to try to provide a facility that will give people the best access possible. There is not now a lot of retail on the street. There is also going to be more than one entrance to the library; there will be a street entrance.

Migdall commented that, as described, this was an amenity that would serve people using the parking garage to get to the library, but not for people in the community. "So this is like a skywalk to the garage?" This is an amenity that only serves people coming in cars.

Don Scheuerman spoke to the issue of travel distances – (he passed out the attached documents of aerial photos of the site) – the County is concerned about ADA access to the Wayne Avenue Garage and access for parents or caregivers bringing children to the library. He calculated different travel distances from parking locations to the library entrance, with and without the pedestrian bridge.

The travel distances from current ADA parking spaces are from the garage's northwest quadrant. In the current arrangement, leaving the Wayne Avenue Garage you have to come out at the mid-point of the garage. Without the pedestrian bridge, there is an 820 to 830 foot distance from where the ADA parking is located, to the entrance to the library. People need to understand that the library needs to be on the third floor to accommodate the future Purple Line, that will pass under the library - - this lines up with what is the 4th floor of the Wayne Avenue Garage. Scheuerman is working with the parking district to adjust parking to accommodate the library: moving handicapped spaces, limiting parking time to two hours, etc.. Code requires that for the 63,000 sq ft library, 150 parking spaces are required. There is currently a surplus of 700 parking spaces in the Wayne Avenue Garage. Since we spent \$30 million building the parking structure, we want to take advantage of the available parking there. We want to make it possible for people coming to library to readily access it and given the fact that the library has to be on the 3rd floor to get purple inline through the site, it seemed like a natural fit. Building the bridge avoids spending \$12 million on underground parking facilities; County wants to take advantage of the money already expended for parking. The Urban Renewal Plan does state there are to be no bridges across Georgia, Colesville, Cedar, and Wayne. Bridges are allowed anywhere else in the downtown area; the Wayne Avenue Garage already has two bridges serving it.

As far as safety, we don't have an "eyes on the street" problem on Wayne Avenue - - this is not a crime problem. There is actually a memo we sent to Council (he handed it out) - - one of the things we point out is that there are 800,000 visitors to the current Silver Spring Library. We expect a 38% increase in facility usage of the new library, based on other library projects. That is over a million visitors to the new Silver Spring Library a year - - the most walking community around. We aren't taking away from safety on the street - - we are making it safer because of the greater use of downtown Silver Spring.

Bill Evans commented on the design of the library. Everyone has to understand we have to get 3 floors up to the library's entrance - - 30 feet in the air. We are looking at a main entrance from Wayne Avenue where the pedestrian bridge would cross. We are also looking at major entrance way from the public park located on this property, just south of the library. We are discussing different ways of bringing people up from the park.. About two thirds of the site will be occupied

by a covered plaza area, with the new Purple Line transit station. The entire area will be a pedestrian zone. The pedestrian zone will be the most scrutinized in downtown area. We will make entrances as inviting as possible whether coming by bus, train, or walking. We have to plan for the future Purple Line alignment in the design of the library.

Mack questioned whether the issue was still under debate, given the committee was told it had to submit its comments by February 11. Gale clarified that the County Executive had requested in November that a mid-block crossing option of Wayne Avenue be evaluated. There was agreement that this was not a viable option. So now the library was being proposed with a pedestrian bridge to cross Wayne Avenue. To build the pedestrian bridge, the 1999 Urban Renewal Plan needs to be amended by the County Council to allow the pedestrian bridge to be built on Wayne. That is what is now under consideration by the County Council – an amendment to the Urban Renewal Plan to allow the library to build a pedestrian bridge. Council is very interested in knowing what the community wants. Gale explained that the Department of Libraries is very interested in having all interested parties express their interests and concerns to the Council.

Ortuzar expressed concern that the presentation held contradictions and that we are planning and designing for cars. That the project should be more like the Rockville Library where everyone walks in at street level and the design is very pedestrian friendly.

Mitchell expressed concern that the pedestrian bridge does not provide a “whole” solution, put only a partial solution. That if folks with kids don’t feel safe crossing Wayne, but only crossing on a pedestrian bridge - - then that is saying that the design of Wayne is not safe for all the other pedestrians and bicyclists crossing it. So much emphasis has been placed on designing it for cars that we have lost sight of providing pedestrian safe roadways and entrances. What is actually going to be done to Wayne Avenue to make it safe for walkers, bikers, and transit users? Where is the vision for the people who are not going to drive to the library? The current entrance is not at the intersection. If the entrance is not at the intersection, then people will cross where the entrance is instead of at the intersection.

Evan pointed out that a major issue was the alignment of the Purple Line that enters the parcel at the Fenton intersection, requiring the crosswalk to be moved west on Wayne. This will need to be studied very carefully. Scheuerman pointed out that what has emerged is a false choice: a pedestrian bridge of a pedestrian safe Wayne Avenue roadway. What we need are both; it is not an either or issue.

Dunckel commented that this was indeed a false choice: it’s not an either or choice. He expressed the committees concerns that treatment of Wayne Ave. is not being addressed. Other bridge experiences have not successfully solved the pedestrian crossing issue; too often the County pays for a pedestrian bridge thinking the pedestrian issue has been addressed, when it is in fact still a problem, like on Old Georgetown at the Metropolitan or Veirs Mill at the Wheaton Metro Station. Perhaps what is needed is a more holistic, comprehensive approach that addresses pedestrian safety with both a bridge and an enhanced pedestrian streetscape. With the train coming in, there may be opportunities. Is there some position that could accommodate a pedestrian bridge as well as an improved pedestrian streetscape for safety

Peter Moe suggested calling the pedestrian bridge a parking access bridge instead – thus separating the role the bridge plays for the pedestrians. What you are essentially doing with this bridge is connecting the library to its parking lot. Jack Strausman added that the bridge may have

other economic impacts by encouraging only direct visits to and from the library, without library patrons patronizing retail on the street.

Mack asked the committee whether they wanted to consider modifying their position now that they have heard additional information and have had time to consider the issue in more detail.

Much discussion among the committee ensued. There was generally consensus that the street level pedestrian access needs to be a priority. The bridge (parking access bridge) may be beneficial to those who drive to the library, but for those using the street, changes to how Wayne could be more pedestrian friendly need to be considered first. The committee agreed that its position as submitted to the County Council on February 11 should not be changed at this time.

After further lengthy discussion, Mack proposed that the committee officially maintain its position, but that the Libraries, having heard the committee's concerns, submit answers in writing to the issues and concerns raised by the committee. In this way, the committee may consider modifying its opposition to the pedestrian/parking access bridge.

Mack clarified, **"We (the committee) have taken a position that we are maintaining - - with the caveat that if information is brought back to us, through the folks who came here this evening, recognizing the areas of concern that we have, that will satisfy the group, then we would consider modifying our position accordingly."** Peter Moe moved this as a motion. **It passed unanimously.** Dunkel was tasked with providing a summary of issues and concern to the Libraries folks for future response to the Committee. This summary is included in the attachment.

5. University Blvd. and New Hampshire: Need for Additional Pedestrian Barriers

Mr. Mack passed around picture marking where he hit a pedestrian on University, near New Hampshire. Though major work has been done, pedestrians are still crossing where there has been no median fence constructed. Mack pointed out that open area you see in the median as the reason why the pedestrian was jay walking because there was no fence restricting their crossing. Mack asked the committee to support him because business association has written to Mr. Porcari and others about the need for immediate restricted fencing on a temporary basis until the purple line comes.

Mack wants the area designate as an HIA and the committee to support fencing to make people use the crosswalk.

Mr. Dunkel suggested we report back w/collision data. It is partly in Prince Georges County. Can't do work other than in Montgomery County. John Britton suggested we may want to turn to COG.

Mr. Street suggested that staff prepare a letter for the County Executive's signature, requesting Neil Pedersen/SHA Administrator, to study the intersection to reduce pedestrian accidents, performing a Pedestrian-Roadway Safety Audit, as we are doing elsewhere in the County. A study is what would be requested.

A motion was moved and seconded: Mr Leggett shall send a letter to Neil Pedersen requesting immediate attention as to what can be done at the intersections on University, east of Lebanon, suggesting a study of the Univesity Blvd. roadway (between Lebannon and

New Hampshire,) to see what can be done to improve pedestrian accidents. Passed unanimously.

6. Report on Status of First HIA on Piney Branch

Doris Depaz and Nestor Alvarenga reported on the successful completion of the first Pedestrian Perception Survey for the Piney Branch HIA. CASA completed nearly 600 surveys; weather was bad during this but the people we interviewed they were very willing to give their information. There was a lot of concern about the street.. People were friendly and approachable; they gave their thoughts, the most common were the streets not safe to ride a bike, very narrow, need more crosswalks, street signs, more time at crosswalks, timing too short, drivers didn't respect pedestrian, bus stop not located properly for crossing the road, speed limit needs to be reduced, more stop signs, traffic light too far away or crosswalk too far away.

Dunckel – we are analyzing results of surveys. We are taking info, inputting and then will come back with report to the committee.

Mrs. Depaz – People generally feel unsafe.

Mrs. Ortuzar requested to see the recommendations of SHA and MCDOT engineering improvements before they are implemented. Dunckel referred the committee to the package that included the CountyStat summary of the recommended actions.

Alan Migdall requested that information for committee meeting be sent out prior to the meeting so members can review it before the meeting.

Time was exhausted, as was the committee. Fred Lees stated that his slide presentation would have to wait for a future meeting.

7. Accessible Pedestrian Signals – Powder Mill and New Hampshire

Guest – Mrs. Eileen Finnegan – talked via phone and email. Question – why SHA wasn't putting in ADA compliant signals initially paid for by developer.

Eileen reported on her experience w/the intersection signals. Suggested a system to track developer commitments to improve pedestrian facilities needs to be put in place - - create a more efficient and effective process.

8. New Business/Committee Comments:

Bells on bikes – needs bikers to use bells: Mr. Migdall noted warning signals on bikes and required already by law. There is an enforcement aspect regarding warning devices on bikes. Mr. Friedman explained the situation on Wisconsin, where this concern was raised. Friedman would like to see a biker lane on Wisconsin w/this stretch. Topic needed to be tabled for next meeting due to lack of time. Not a simple question nor a simple solution. Mr. Mack requested Mr. Friedman prep some points for committee's consideration at next meeting. Mr. Dunckel can then advise the residence the committee is considering the issue.

Budget priorities were passed out and explained by Dunckel. Moe noted that the input provided was not of the quality it could have been had we spent more time on the topic, with more explanation.

Harry Thomas: described situation on Muddy Branch and West Side Drive – see his handout.
Mr. Lees agreed that DTEO will log it in as a request.

Motion to approve January minutes – passed

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Attachment 1 to March PTSAC Minutes:
Submission to County Council and County Executive on PTSAC Position on Silver
Spring Library Pedestrian Bridge
Submitted February 11, 2009 via Email

Honorable Councilmembers:

The following is being submitted for your consideration, coming from the last meeting of the PTSAC on Feb 5, 2009.

Thank you.

Erwin H. Mack
Chair, PTSAC

This letter is in reference to pedestrian and bicycle travel and safety for the proposed Silver Spring library in downtown Silver Spring. One of the duties of the Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (PTSAC) according to the Montgomery County Code is to: "advise the Executive and Council of priorities and needs for pedestrian and bicycle safety and access, and other pedestrian-related issues" (Chapter 49. Article 9. Sec 49-81)

Therefore:

The PTSAC does not support the construction of a pedestrian bridge across Wayne Avenue in downtown Silver Spring. More cost efficient and proven improvements that will serve a greater number of library patrons as well as the larger Silver Spring community should be pursued and prioritized to provide access to the new library.

A pedestrian bridge at this location is prohibited in the Silver Spring 1999 Urban Renewal Plan. The library project should adhere to the requirements established in the Renewal Plan. There is national evidence that pedestrian bridges are costly, often underused, and can impede the creation of vibrant urban spaces.

A pedestrian bridge across Wayne Avenue from the parking garage will not improve safety for the majority of pedestrians and bicyclists in downtown Silver Spring. A pedestrian bridge will serve a small number of library patrons parking on the 4th floor of the Wayne Avenue Garage at great and disproportionate expense. All residents and visitors traveling to the library and other nearby destinations will be better served by focusing resources on redesigning Wayne Avenue to equally accommodate all users and truly be a shared space. Traffic calming techniques, road dieting, and enhanced treatment of at-grade crossings of Wayne Avenue (such as a raised crossing,

curb extensions, leading pedestrian intervals, distinctive paving, landscaping) can create comfortable and safe crossings for patrons of all ages and mobility levels whether they choose to walk, bike, drive or take transit. A pedestrian bridge will allow Wayne Avenue to continue to prioritize motor vehicle travel creating an unfriendly and less safe environment for patrons, particularly those who choose to walk, bike or take transit to the library.

A pedestrian bridge from the parking garage will degrade the street environment, increase security issues, and discourage walking, bicycling and transit use.

Pedestrian bridges reduce street life and activity, create dark, unwelcoming places underneath, present significant security issues, and allow roadways to become higher speed/volume facilities with reduced safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. In designing the new library, access by foot, bike and transit should be the priority, in addition to creating a streetscape that invites non-automobile modes of transportation.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Submitted by

Erwin H. Mack
Chairman, PTSAC

Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee: request for additional information pertaining to pedestrian safety at the Silver Spring Library

- 1. A roadway design/streetscape plan for Wayne Avenue between Georgia and Fenton that includes accommodations of the future Purple Line. Plans should prioritize pedestrian, bicycle, and transit travel. An elevated bridge only provides a safe connection for motorists because pedestrians at street grade will not climb four stories to the elevated bridge; significant improvements need to be made to Wayne Avenue to provide safe pedestrian access to the library. Streetscape improvements and enhanced pedestrian crossings (i.e. curb extensions, leading pedestrian signal intervals, stop bars, raised crossing,) along Wayne Avenue should be shown. Traffic calming, lane reductions, and the most effective strategies to discourage mid-block crossings should also be indicated.**
- 2. Pedestrian and bicycle design features for Wayne Avenue between and including the intersection with Fenton, access to library entrances, and along Wayne Avenue (north side/garage side and south side/library side.) The Committee believes that site design and library access points should be more pedestrian and bicycle-centric, rather than automobile-centric.**
- 3. Any other at-grade pedestrian improvements that will enhance pedestrian safety for those accessing the library from the street, and not driving to park on the 4th level of the Wayne Avenue Parking Garage, where the bridge would be connected to the parking lot.**
- 4. A key issue that should be included in the library's design is how it contributes to and equally supports pedestrian, bicycle, transit and motorist safety of Wayne Avenue.**